



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

February 20, 2015

Winter weather brought the State Capitol to a near standstill this week beginning Tuesday. Of the limited activity, education took center stage. On Wednesday, the House Appropriations Committee heard [SB 14 – Academic Standards/Rules Review/Coal Ash/Funds](#). This legislation would, among other things, transfer funds from the current SBE/DPI budget to the Rules Review Commission and the Department of Administration (DOA). Please find below further details on the committee's amendments to the bill.

On Thursday, the House and Senate Education Appropriations Committees met jointly for each education sector (K-12 public schools, Community Colleges, University System, and Private Universities) to provide an overview of recent work and budget needs for this legislative session. SBE Chairman Bill Cobey informed the Committee about the SBE Strategic Plan and Superintendent June Atkinson outlined key functions of DPI and our collective work throughout the State. To see all materials and presentations from this meeting, click [here](#).

In other education and weather news, the NC Supreme Court postponed hearing arguments in the lawsuit challenging the Opportunity Scholarship program. This program provides state-funded vouchers for eligible children to offset tuition at private K-12 schools. The program is operational in the current school year, pending the outcome of the court challenge. According to the State Educational Assistance Authority (the entity that oversees this program), \$4.2 million has allowed over 1,200 students to attend 216 private schools throughout North Carolina. Some opponents of this law contend that private schools can deny admission to students with different religious beliefs or disabilities and may discriminate based on the sexual orientation of students or parents. Arguments were postponed until February 24.

Relevant Bills in Committee This Week:

[SB 14](#) Academic Standards/Rules Review/Coal Ash/Funds

This bill would have required the SBE to transfer \$100K from its current operating budget to the Office of Administrative Hearings for litigation costs associated with the *North Carolina State Board of Education v. The State of North Carolina and the Rules Review Commission* complaint. Also, it would have required DPI to transfer \$275K from its current operating budget to DOA to support operations of the Academic Standards Review Commission (ASRC).

In the full House Appropriations Committee on Wednesday, the committee amended the bill to allow DPI to transfer both sums of money (\$100K and \$275K) from the current fiscal year budget, without limiting the transfer from operating funds only. The bill is calendared for discussion and vote in the House on Tuesday, February 24.

[SB 15](#) Unemployment Insurance Law Changes

This bill would make numerous substantive, technical, and clarifying changes to state unemployment laws, as recommended by the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Unemployment Insurance. Among other directives, this bill requires increased cooperation between various State agencies to collect and manage employment data. The bill changes the appointment schedule, requirements, and process for members of the Division of Employment Security Board of Review.

Relevant Bills with Action This Week:

[HB 25](#) School Calendar Flexibility/Alamance-Burlington (Riddell, Ross)

- Serial referral to House Committee on Commerce and Job Development stricken

[HB 34](#) School Calendar Flexibility/Certain Counties (Jones, Holloway)

- Serial referral to House Committee on Commerce and Job Development stricken

[HB 62](#) School Calendar Flexibility/ Certain School Systems (Richardson)

- Withdrawn from the House Committee on Commerce and Job Development
- Re-referred to the House Committee on Education – K-12

[HB 64](#) School Calendar Flexibility (Lambeth, Hanes, Conrad)

- Withdrawn from the House Committee on Commerce and Job Development
- Re-referred to the House Committee on Education – K-12

[HB 68](#) School Calendar Flexibility/Certain School Systems (J. Bell, G. Graham, L. Bell)

- Withdrawn from the House Committee on Commerce and Job Development
- Re-referred to the House Committee on Education – K-12

[HB 77](#) School Calendar Flexibility/Certain School Systems (Speciale)

- Withdrawn from the House Committee on Commerce and Job Development
- Re-referred to the House Committee on Education – K-12

[HB 90](#) School Calendar Flexibility/Rowan County (Warren)

- Referred to the House Committee on Education – K-12, if favorable, Commerce and Job Development.
- Serial referral to the House Committee on Commerce and Job Development stricken

[HB 94](#) Calendar Flexibility/Certain Counties (Presnell)

- Filed

[HB 96](#) Charter School Financial Accountability (Hall)

- Filed

- [SB 91](#) ([HB 72](#)) School of Government Pilot Project Standards (Hartsell)
- Referred to the Senate Committee on Education – Universities
- [SB 94](#) Education Simplification Amendment (Tillman, Wade, Rabin)
- Referred to the Committee on Rules and Operations of the Senate
- [SB 95](#) Performance-Base RIF/School Policy (Barefoot, Soucek)
- Filed
- [SB 97](#) State Advisory Council on Indian Education (Davis)
- Filed
- [SB 102](#) Child Advocacy Center Funds (Curtis, Barringer, Jackson)
- Filed
- [SB 107](#) Restore Masters-Degree Pay for All Teachers (Smith)
- Filed

Meetings: February 23 – 26:

Monday, February 23

- 1:00 PM Joint Legislative Program Evaluation Oversight Committee, 544 LOB

Tuesday, February 24

- 8:30 AM House and Senate (Joint) Education Appropriations, 423 LOB
- 10:00 AM House Education – K-12, 643 LOB
 - HB 18 Planning Year for CIHS
 - HB 35 Education Innovation Task Force

Wednesday, February 25

- 8:30 AM House and Senate (Joint) Education Appropriations, 423 LOB
- 10:00 AM House Health Committee, 643 LOB
 - HB 13 Amend School Health Assessment Requirement
- 11:00 AM Senate Committee on Education/Higher Education, 544 LOB
 - SB 37 Waive Tuition/Fallen Officer Was Guardian
- 12:00 PM Workforce and Economic Development, 544 LOB

Thursday, February 26

- 8:30 AM House and Senate (Joint) Education Appropriations, 423 LOB
- 11:00 AM House Education – Community Colleges, 544 LOB
 - HB 47 Youth Career Connect

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